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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS
EXECUTIVE

MATTHEW WESAW
DIRECTOR

Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan
St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church
343 S. Main Street, Romeo, MI
May 2, 2014
Meeting Minutes No. 294

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairperson Gil Guzman called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Commissioners Present: Gil Guzman, Norma Huizar, Carlos Alvarado, JoAnn Chavez, Armando Hernandez, Sonya Hernandez, Gilberto Guevara, Osvaldo Rivera

Staff Present: Marylou Mason, Victoria Garcia, MDCR Liaison Lee Gonzales

II. Introduction of Commissioners

Chairman Guzman asked Commissioners and staff to introduce themselves.

Chairman Guzman invited Benita Rendon-Murray to introduce herself. Ms. Rendon-Murray, co-chair of the Great Lakes Migrant Resource Council, and Ms. Vicki Echske thanked the Commission for coming to their area and offered Commissioners coffee/juice and rolls for breakfast and an authentic Mexican luncheon that will be served following the meeting in celebration of Cinco de Mayo.

III. Welcoming Remarks

In the absence of Father Stephen Reckker, Sister Valerie Knoche welcomed the Commission to Romeo and the church (in both English and Spanish). Sister Valerie Knoche also read a letter from Father Eduardo. Father Eduardo Montemayor is a Mexican Priest who is here working in the Hispanic ministry office for Bishop Arturo Cepeda. Unfortunately, Father Eduardo is in Mexico and left a letter giving his apologies for not being able to participate in the meeting and to meet the Commissioners.

IV. Approval of Absences: Jessie Venegas (work commitment), Julio Morales, (work commitment), Julia Guevara (work commitment), Carlos Sanchez (work commitment), Noel Garcia (family commitment)

MOTION: Commissioner S. Hernandez moved to accept the absences of Commissioners Venegas, Morales, Guevara, Sanchez and Garcia. Motion supported by Commissioner A. Hernandez. Motion carried.

V. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Hernandez asked if a few items could be discussed under New Business to include: the budget, consideration of having the Health committee be a standalone committee and receive clarity on mileage reimbursement for Commissioners as stated in the Bylaws.

Chairman Guzman responded that Commissioner Hernandez needed to put her request in writing so that her issues may be added to next month's meeting agenda.

MOTION: Commissioner Sonya Hernandez moved to accept the agenda of May 2, 2014. Commissioner Gil Guevara supported the motion. Motion carried.

V. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Commissioner Chavez moved to accept the minutes of March 20, 2014. Commissioner A. Hernandez supported the motion. Motion carried.

VI. Public Forum:

Chairman Guzman asked Ms. Rendon Murray introduce her fellow committee members of the Great Lakes Migrant Resource Council that are in attendance and include what agency they are with:

Patricia Baird, Director of Fair Housing: Ms. Baird said as the Director of the Fair Housing Dept, her program areas include 14 counties (including the Thumb) and has offices and staff in Genesee and Saginaw counties. They perform fair housing testing which means they send testers out to see if the complex will rent to minorities and to see if they treat all potential renters the same. She offered her assistance to anyone who needs a presentation on education for individuals on fair housing standards.

Commissioner Alvarado inquired if her agency followed through and investigates complaints.

Ms. Baird stated they are an enforcement agency that is funded by the federal government (US Dept of HUD). They listen to complaints from the community, file a complaint on their behalf, they will test the properties so they have further evidence of discrimination, and go through the entire process with the complainant. They also have Spanish speaking employees available for the Hispanic population.

Commissioner Guevara said in Saginaw there is an employee that works on fair housing and he thought it would be a good idea for Ms. Baird and staff to come and meet with him.

Ms. Baird said she would be happy to assist Commissioner Guevara.

Jesse Castillo, Health Delivery Services, Saginaw: Mr. Castillo stated he is a coordinator for his agency. His agency takes a medical team in a bus and visits migrant camps in the Imlay City area and surround cities and they provide medical care and checkups to those in need. They provide services from June to late October every year.

Commissioner Guevara stated he is very familiar with the great work of Health Delivery and Mr. David Gamez, not only in the Saginaw area but all over the state. He congratulated Mr. Castillo and his continued work with Health Delivery.

Wendy Conroy and Jessie Billian: MI Works, Thumb Area: Ms. Conroy indicated their focus is employment and providing services. They assist individuals with filling out applications; connect them with employers, providing workshops or assistance that aids them to secure employment.

Ms. Billian stated she also works with MI Works but is involved with East Michigan Prosperity region. They collaborate with the I-69 corridor, and they work with St. Clair, Genesee, Lapeer and Shiawassee Counties. She mentioned that Ms. Rendon-Murray is in their office and is an excellent resource for them. They recently were awarded a grant through the MI Dept. of Agriculture for an initiative that is called Ag Partnerships Unlimited. The key focus is an online, community collaborative which will create an online resource for people who are involved in the agricultural field and linking this with in-person events, specialized job fairs, and training.

Alicia Pantoja, Seasonal Farmworker: Ms. Pantoja introduced herself and stated she was a seasonal farmworker.

Chairman Guzman asked if she was a year around worker and if she used to be a migrant.

Ms. Pantoja stated yes, she works year around and she was a migrant worker before moving to Michigan.

Steve Villarreal, College Student: Mr. Villarreal stated he is currently a college student and working on a human services degree. His ambition is to work and be able to help Latino people in Michigan.

Ryan Bishop, Dept. of Human Services, Lapeer County: Mr. Bishop stated he is an Eligibility Specialist and provides assistance to people by determining what services they are eligible for such as: food assistance, day care, cash assistance, etc.

Ann Chapaton, Program Manager, Dept. of Human Services: She stated there have been a decrease in resources and the political climates that things change year to year. They are attempting to get counties to work together.

Maria Elena Rodriguez, former Commissioner – owner of Maria Elena & Co: Ms. Rodriguez stated her business promotes Mexico's exquisite culture. She stated she is on an advisory committee for an upcoming exhibit at the Detroit Institute of Art. Next year they will be having an exhibit on Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. There will be an art competition at the Detroit Rivers Days in June. She encouraged everyone to attend and participate. Ms. Rodriguez stated she will forward the information so the Commission can post the information on their website.

Lisa Hartwig, Mike Pirrone Produce: Her business packages and distributes farm produce.

Mike Alfieri, Packing Manager for Mike Pirrone Produce: He stated works in the field.

Alex Sampson, Social Security Administration: His agency assists with obtaining a social security number and retirement or disability benefits. There are many offices around the state but he works in the downtown Flint office.

Luz Gayon-Telleria, Catholic Charities, Detroit Diocese of MI: Her agency covers 6 counties, they offer basic ESL classes, offer job skills, parenting classes, immigration, youth programs, and other self-help classes.

Jacqueline Rascon, Town Mortgage Company: She is a mortgage loan officer. She works with HUD counseling agency in the Detroit and with NCLR and works closely with the Hispanic population to gain more Hispanic homeownership.

Mildred Crest, Wage and Hour Division, Outreach Specialist: They enforce several labor laws, specifically the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, which sets provisions for wages, hours, transportation, and housing as it relates to migrant workers. They also enforce the Fair Labor Standards Act that covers minimum wage.

Lorena White, Hispanic Technology & Community Center in Flint, Site Manager: She stated they are non-profit agency that assists Hispanics and Latino families with DHS services, unemployment, resumes, and many other services. The American GI Forum offers translation and interpretation services and all services are free to the community.

Commissioner Guevara inquired if there were services available for veterans and their families.

Ms. White stated they currently do not have any programs or services for veterans. They have discussed the issue in the past.

Laurie Ball, Outreach Coordinator, Hispanic Technology & Community Center in Flint: She assists the community with DHS applications online and she visits the schools to see if students need assistance.

Silvia Ciecko, Romeo Community Schools: She is the parent educator and bilingual liaison for their district. She does home visits, parenting classes, and group meetings with parents.

Anthony Ray, Immigration Attorney, Ray Law International: Mr. Ray stated his practice focuses solely on immigration law. He has an office in Michigan and in New York. He has been practicing immigration law for 15 years and he handles all types of immigration law. He has a bilingual assistant, Selia, as well as other Spanish-speaking staff.

Commissioner Guevara inquired as to Mr. Ray's opinion on N400/Naturalization application that is now 21 pages.

Mr. Ray stated that obviously no one is happy about the additional paperwork but we want to be an additional resource, in addition to non-profits that offer assistance with the paperwork. The reason for the additional paperwork is to cover questions in regard to national security. Even though it's additional paperwork, it shouldn't prevent anyone from applying for citizenship.

Selia Alvarez, Ray Law International: She stated the practice has a radio show on immigration, held by Lorena White and herself, that is aired every two weeks and broadcast out of Novi, MI. They let the Latino people know that they have rights, specifically immigration, and that the initial consultations are free of charge.

Angelita Ramirez, KPAC: She belongs to a catholic organization and is interested in learning the laws and regulations because she comes across many Hispanic people that do not speak English but need medical assistance.

Several of the attendees advised her to contact Dept. of Human Services and they can assist those individuals.

Gustavo Echavarria, Western MI University, CAMP Recruiter: He is the recruiter for CAMP Program at Western MI University. This is the 2nd year of the program at Western MI University and recruiting for the 3rd year. The program is funded under migrant education and they provide economic services and support for first time migrant, former migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their children to help them have a successful college experience during their first year. His office is in Kalamazoo. He brought information on his program for those in attendance. To qualify for the program, individuals must: be US citizen or permanent resident, have graduated from a high school or have GED, be Pell Grant eligible and need to file for financial aid and be a migrant, former migrant or seasonal farmworkers. There are no age limits and is not based on race.

Commissioner Alvarado inquired if DACA students qualified for the program.

Mr. Chavaria stated that unfortunately they are not able to service DACA students but they may apply for private funding available at Western MI University for the undocumented students.

Chairman Guzman stated there is a program called the Kalamazoo Promise in Kalamazoo. It is the only city in the United States that offers such a program. The promise is that any child that attends school within the Kalamazoo public school district from kindergarten to graduation, the promise will pay for their college. The program will prorate the amount you are eligible for if the student was a migrant and attended a Kalamazoo school seasonally. Only 2% of students in Kalamazoo take advantage of the promise.

VIII. Executive Reports

A. MDCR Liaison Lee Gonzales: Mr. Gonzales reviewed four key areas 1) MDCR Charting the Course/Strategic Plan in connection with the HLCOM Strategic Plan, 2) HLCOM budget & snapshot of the state's general fund 4) XBC (Cross Boundary Collaboration) and why it matters 4) significance about the Supreme Court's decision on Schuette Case.

Charting the Course

Mr. Gonzales stated that after our February Leadership Development Workshop in Bay City, MDCR held its vigorous All-Agency Strategic Planning Session about one month later.

MDCR Director Matt Wesaw outlined his efforts aimed at a change agenda for our MDCR family. He mentioned Best Practices, and Next Practices for that matter, and an organizational renewal based on collective action strategies.

Because of the HLC's vital work, he shared this March 12 excerpt from Matt's e-mail:

Since tomorrow is my first all agency as the Director of the Department of Civil Rights, my hope is that we begin to rebuild our foundation of service – a foundation that was developed over the past fifty years by the hard work and good will of our employees, Commissioners, Directors, and partners.

This foundation must include mutual trust, respect, and compassion. And beyond that, we need to revive something I call our “esprit de corps” – a common spirit of comradeship, enthusiasm, loyalty, and devotion to a cause among the members of a group. I believe at one time this department was characterized by our “esprit de corps”, and I would like to see us regain that spirit.

HANDOUT (Crown Newsletter)

He stated the first draft of MDCR's strategic plan is near completion. This is an opportunity to harmonize priorities between MDCR and HLC, while promoting joint efforts with Global Michigan and, the Michigan Office for New Americans.

HLCOM Budget: Per Director Wesaw, DCH Boilerplate – and MOU. (Handout) Mr. Gonzales discussed that a large portion of the Commission's budget comes from the Dept. of Community Health for mental health services.

Note on State Budget – Keep an eye on changes to the General Fund.

Succession planning – Term Limits precludes Senator Roger Kahn from seeking re-election. Senator Kahn is the Appropriations Chair and has been the lead advocate on the Commission receiving the funding from Dept. of Community Health. We must also look at Leadership both in the House and Senate. Mr. Gonzales stated that he is working with Director Mason on this issue.

Office for New Americans: This is a new office within state government and is charged with supporting immigration initiatives for the State, coordinating with state agencies providing programs related to services for immigrants, analyzing and making recommendations to the Governor on state and federal policies and programs and working on the Global Michigan Initiative. The HLCOM will be working very closely with this office.

Commissioner Chavez stated that she believes the Office for New Americans seems to focus on people that are not of Hispanic/Latino descent, and the EB, but rather people coming from China, India and other immigrants. She asked if we should be writing a letter and advising the Office for New Americans that they are overlooking a critical fabric of this state. She further stated that everything she has read and reviewed would suggest that they don't care about the people who work on the farms; only immigrants that are within the highly technical or highly specialized fields of work. She said it is our job and obligation to advise the Governor that they cannot overlook a critical component, not only of the state of Michigan, but of this country.

Mr. Gonzales stated he appreciates Commissioner Chavez's comments and she will have an opportunity to address this issue in June with Mr. Bing Goei as he will be invited to our meeting.

Commissioner Chavez requested to the Commission Chair that HLCOM take a position and have a letter sent to Mr. Goei so when he attends our meeting, he is prepared to answer the difficult questions. She stated it would be better that he was informed and not caught off guard.

Mr. Gonzales suggested that these wonderful ideas be drafted together as we work very closely with Bing Goei.

Chairman Guzman was in agreement with Commissioner Chavez and stated the Commission will put together a list of ideas and provide to Mr. Gonzales for his review prior to submitting to Mr. Goei.

Commissioner Alvarado stated the big elephant in the room is the undocumented. No one dares to talk to commit because politically it's a liability to be behind the undocumented. The challenge is to bring to the agenda the issue of the 11 million people in the US, 700,000 here in Michigan which are already here that are undocumented. The Governor's initiative has brought the issue of immigration and softened it for the people of Michigan.

Commissioner Chavez stated that the face of the undocumented is not simply our migrant farmworkers. She added that many of those 11 million people are tax payers but will never recover those benefits.

Commissioner S. Hernandez stated that as a state agency we need to do more to help our people who have waited up to 10 years or more to become documented citizens. This is unheard of for people of any other country. It should not take this long.

XBC: Partners and Constituencies – MSFW, Interagency Migrant Services Committee, Consul General of Mexico, and others. The Michigan College Access Network is an excellent organization with an impressive network statewide. MCAN's Mission: To increase college readiness, participation, and completion in Michigan, particularly among low-income students, first generation college going students, and students of color.

The Supreme Court ruled last week in the Schuette case that Michigan's voter-enacted Prop2 ban is constitutional. This decision upheld the right of MI's citizens to ban race conscious admissions at state colleges and universities (and in many other governmental activities as well). As you may recall, Prop2 instigated the issuance of Executive Directive 2006-7 to the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, charging the MCRC with investigating how the passage and implementation of Proposal 2 will impact state laws and regulations, state educational institutions and programs and state economic development efforts.

On March 6, 2007, MCRC issued a report, which identified statutes, policies and programs that were considered not compliant with the constitutional amendment -- and recommended legislative modifications. The MCRC's findings, in regard to the statute that governs the Michigan Commission on Spanish Affairs, incorporated recommendations that the term "Spanish-Speaking" be replaced with "Hispanic/Latino" and other new responsibilities. This resulted in a new law that added to the Commission's duties.

Consequently, Public Act 146 of 2010 changed the names of the Commission, the Office and the Interagency Council from using "Spanish-Speaking" and replacing with "Hispanic/Latino" along with other requirements. In addition to the law, an excellent backgrounder from the Senate Fiscal Agency (SFA) in regard to this enabling legislation, Senate Bill 215, the following link to the Analysis as Reported from Committee is helpful:

B. Chairperson's Report:

Chairman Guzman stated the executive committee met last night and would like to recommend the following to the Commissioners: The Executive Committee will hold its meeting the day/night before the Commission Meeting and Committees meet the morning of the Commission Meeting. This way each Committee will be providing a fresh report. He also stated it's a good idea to face to face contact when meeting, if possible. He added it is up to each committee the morning of

the Commission Meeting. This way each Committee will be providing a fresh report. He also stated it's a good idea to have face to face contact when meeting, if possible. He added it is up to each committee.

Commissioner Chavez asked if committee meetings before the Commission Meeting are in addition to or to replace the meeting we previously discussed having following each Commission Meeting. This would be a very long meeting.

Chairman Guzman stated this would replace the other meeting.

C. Executive Director's Report:

Director Mason stated Commissioners have had the opportunity to review her report and she entertained any questions they may have.

Director Mason stated that recently the office mailed out the most recent updated strategic plan drafts for each Committee. These updates were as a result of committees having a conference call to update their plans according to suggestions made by our Retreat Facilitator Kristen Van Reesema. Director Mason stated each committee needs to complete and finalize each plan as soon as possible. Once the committee plans are complete and finalized, the office will integrate them all into one Strategic Plan. The office is available to assist all committees with additional conference calls, if needed.

Ms. Mason passed out her report on the MAFO Conference she attended with Chairman Guzman in March/April. She attached copies of the workshops with descriptions, agenda, and information on all speakers. She also commented the planning committee for the 2015 MAFO conference is in Albuquerque, NM May 28-31, 2014.

Recently, Commissioner S. Hernandez had emailed a few different education reports and statistics. The office xeroxed the reports and provided each Commissioner with a copy in their packet.

Ms. Mason announced that the Commission purchased a table for attendance to the MI Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Economic Breakfast on May 16th, 7:30am.

Also, La Sed is having their Annual Recognition lunch on May 8th, Ford Conference Center, Dearborn, tickets are \$75.

The flower bill from the funeral for Ms. Margarita Noyola is still outstanding. It was requested that each Commissioner donate \$20 towards the flowers that were sent.

Ms. Mason announced that the Governor's Staff has contacted her to discuss the possibility of having a mid-summer MAFO mini-conference in

Michigan. Possible locations include: Grand Rapids, Lansing or Detroit. Funding is needed before any planning can occur.

IX. Committee Reports:

- A. Economic Development/Agriculture: Commissioner Sanchez – no report
- B. Education/Health: Chairman Guzman reported that the Education Committee had discussed having a meeting following today's meeting but due to a few committee members being absent, the meeting will not be held. A conference call will be scheduled so all members can participate. No report given.
- C. Legislative & Civic Engagement: Commissioner Alvarado stated a conference call was held in April and the committee completed their section of the strategic plan. Their final plan was emailed to the office.

The committee will start the planning for 2014 Legislative Advocacy Day and is looking forward to a well-attended event this year.

Ms. Mason stated the office is working with staff at the Capitol to find available dates for the event.

MOTION: Commissioner Chavez moved to accept committee reports. Commissioner Hernandez supported the motion. Motion carried.

X. Old Business:

- A. Strategic Plan: Already discussed.
- B. Letters of support for Congressional Gold Medal for Borinqueneers: Chairman Guzman stated the office received a request for a resolution from the Commission to support a request for Puerto Rican Regime to receive a congressional gold medal for their service. The same group is now requesting 2 letters of support for this same cause.

MOTION: Commissioner Rivera moved to support the request that the Commission provide two letters of support for the 65th Regime, known as the Borinqueneers, to support their mission to receive a Congressional Gold Medal. Supported by Commissioner Chavez. Motion carried.

XI. New Business:

- A. Resolution for Julian Samora Research Institute (JSRI), 25th Anniversary: Ms. Mason stated that the JSRI has requested that the Commission provide a resolution in celebration of the Institute's 25th Anniversary. The event will be held in October/November, 2014.

MOTION: Commissioner Alvarado moved for the office to prepare a resolution in celebration of the Julian Samora Research Institute's 25th Anniversary. Supported by Commissioner A. Hernandez. Motion carried.

B. Next Meeting Date: June 20, 2014 Traverse City, MI-Chamber of Commerce: Ms. Mason stated she has been in contact with our meeting sponsors for a list of needs for the migrants. The Commission, in past years, has held clothing drives, and provided health and beauty items, food items and toys and taken the items to distribute for the migrants. We also provide a dinner for the migrant families.

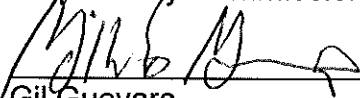
C. Announcements/Miscellaneous: Ms. Mason thanked Commissioner Alvarado and John Roy Castillo for all their work with the decorations for Cinco de Mayo and for setting up the room for the meeting.

Immediately following the meeting, an authentic Mexican luncheon was served. Everyone was invited to stay for the luncheon. Sister Valorie was once again thanked for her support and assistance in the planning and set-up of the room for the meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Chavez motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Guevara supported the motion. Motion carried.


Meeting adjourned at 11:53a.m.

Prepared by Commission staff:



Gil Guevara
Vice-Chairperson
06-20-14

Date



Norma Huizar
Secretary

Date